J. Westermann K-5 (1910) 1912 F223 Shilluk F223

856 MARRIAGE AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

On the average number of children in a family vide page XXXIII. The birth of twins is regarded as the greatest of good fortune.

851

Affection of parents for their children is not wanting. The mother often places the infant in a long basket or bird made of grass; she also carries an axe head or carves with a cut in some secure place, while the child sleeps. Education is limited to teaching the children the work and skill which the parents command.

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The *naming* of the children is done by some member of the family, in most cases by the parents or grandparents. The name generally has some connection with circumstances attending the birth. The name *Agar* ("the first") is often given when the birth occurs in close proximity to a death in the family. *Kwoth* is a very common name; it indicates that the mother of the child has prayed for a child by arranging a sacred house (a temple of Nyikang or of some other ancient king) with a branch of cane. Men often acquire a second name when grown up; this one is in most cases called after the name of a cow or an ox.

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When the boys are from thirteen to fifteen years old, they start the cultivation of a small field of their own, for the result of which they try to acquire credit.

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— The boys and young men of a village live in the same year form a companionship, all members of such a "class" having a common name. The young men of a village do not sleep in their parents' houses, but their common sleeping place is in the new shed of the village. The act of sleeping in the barn is called "sleeping in the ashes" from the fact that they during this time sleep in the ashes of the fire kept smouldering in the barn.

567 SLAVES

The Shilluks have some slaves secured before the present régime. Some of these are Shilluks, others are from the Kordofan and also from further up the Nile. They were secured in war or purchased from the Arabs. In single cases Shilluk parents sold their children for food in time of famine, or gave them away to chiefs.

764 BURIAL

When a grown-up man dies, he is buried in or just before his hut. An ox is killed as a funeral feast, and its horns are planted on the grave so that they are visible from without. Women and children are buried in the bush. — For a description of a burial vide pages 111 and 133.

Some time after the death of a man a funeral ceremony is held; it takes place when the property of the deceased is divided among his heirs; this may be from about one month to one year after the person has died. The members of the neighbouring villages are invited. An ox is killed on the occasion. The ceremony consists in dancing, making displays of arms, feasting on the meat of the slain ox, and drinking merissa. The women also partake in it. Whether any religious actions are connected with it, I do not know.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

dowry. The models are hung up in front of the hut and the ceremony is concluded with beer-drinking. 852 604

About a month later the child may be taken home to be shown to its father. The mother carrying the infant is accompanied by three or four girl friends and the old woman who attended her at the confinement. The father and his male relatives and friends inspect the baby outside the hut to satisfy themselves that it shows no deformity or any other abnormality. If such unhappily were the case, the child would be enclosed together with a live sheep in a basket and thrown into the Nile. When the father is satisfied that the child is normal, a goat or sheep is killed, the meat eaten at the evening feast and the skin scraped and softened to serve as a sleeping mat for the baby. Beer is prepared and the whole village invited to come to the party. Those who come, however, are expected to bring some small gifts of money, beads, bracelets and the like. These are the perquisites of the midwife, the beer makers and the girls who escorted the mother and child back to her home. 846 851 852 [847] [825] [574] [854] [481]

There are no special ceremonies for the birth of children after the first born, and the mother may or may not return to her father's village for her confinements as she pleases. There is however a little feast to celebrate the birth and, as before, a sheep or goat is killed and the skin used as the infant's sleeping mat. 852 843 574 864

During a woman's pregnancy neither she nor her husband is permitted to visit anyone who is sick. They are considered to be unlucky and their visit to a sick person would surely result in his death. The most that is allowed is that they may stand at the fence surrounding the house where the sick person is and enquire after him. 843 758 574 777

With reference to the custom of the young wife leaving her husband's home for her father's for the birth of her first child, it must be mentioned that the wives of the king, not merely on the occasion of their first born, but for all subsequent confinements, must leave Fashoda. They do not go to their former home, however, but to the village of some chief at a considerable distance from the capital. The child that is 843 414 414 608